

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the
Southern District of Ohio

2019 DEC 31 AM 10:53

In the Matter of the Search of

USPS Priority Mail parcel 9405 5368 9784 6191 1550 84
addressed to "AMELIA CROCKETT, 4200 VALLEY VIEW DR,
KNOXVILLE TN 37917-1277"

Case No.

2:19mj975

APPLICATION FOR A SEARCH WARRANT

I, a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government, request a search warrant and state under penalty of perjury that I have reason to believe that on the following person or property

USPS Priority Mail parcel 9405 5368 9784 6191 1550 84 addressed to "AMELIA CROCKETT, 4200 VALLEY VIEW DR,
KNOXVILLE TN 37917-1277"

located in the Southern District of Ohio, there is now concealed (identify the person or describe the property to be seized):

A quantity of a controlled substance and/or proceeds which are evidence thereof, and/or contraband, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 843(b).

The basis for the search under Fed. R. Crim. P. 41(c) is (check one or more):

- ☒ evidence of a crime;
- ☒ contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed;
- ☒ property designed for use, intended for use, or used in committing a crime;
- ☐ a person to be arrested or a person who is unlawfully restrained.

The search is related to a violation of:

Code Section

21 U.S.C. 841(a)(1)

21 U.S.C. 843(b)

Offense Description

Possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance

Prohibited use of a communication center (U.S. Mail)

The application is based on these facts:

As set forth in the attached Affidavit of Postal Inspector Justin D. Koble

- ☒ Continued on the attached sheet.
- ☐ Delayed notice of _____ days (give exact ending date if more than 30 days: _____) is requested under 18 U.S.C. § 3103a, the basis of which is set forth on the attached sheet.

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date:

Dec. 31, 2019

City and state: Columbus, Ohio

Applicant's signature

Justin D. Koble, U.S. Postal Inspector

Printed name and title

Judge's signature

Hon. Kimberly A Jolson, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO
EASTERN DIVISION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE SEARCH OF:

United States Postal Service Priority Mail
parcel bearing tracking number 9405 5368
9784 6191 1550 84 addressed to
“AMELIA CROCKETT, 4200 BALLEY
VIEW DR, KNOXVILLE TN 37917-1211”

Case No. _____

MAGISTRATE JUDGE
Kimberly A Jolson

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR A SEARCH WARRANT

I, Justin D. Koble, Postal Inspector, being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. I have been a U.S. Postal Inspector for the past 5 years, enforcing federal mail and drug laws; currently assigned to Columbus, OH. I have received training at the U.S. Postal Inspection Service National Training Seminars for mail-related criminal investigations and have investigated cases with other federal, state, and local police units.
2. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is aware that drug traffickers have been using Priority Mail Express, a business-oriented service offered by the Post Office, to transport controlled substances and transfer funds, cash or otherwise, to further their enterprises. As a result of past investigations and prosecutions, the Postal Inspection Service has determined that a number of indicators can be used to identify packages containing contraband that have been entered into the Priority Mail network. Inspectors routinely review shipment documents and Priority Mail parcels originating from or destined to drug source areas to identify instances where there is a possibility of drug trafficking.
3. On December 10, 2019, U.S. Postal Inspectors identified a USPS Priority Mail parcel with tracking number 9405 5368 9784 6191 1550 84 (hereinafter the “Subject Parcel”), which was believed to contain narcotics due to routine profiling. Inspectors identified this as a suspect drug parcel based on several characteristics, including but not limited to type of mail, origin, destination, postage, and size. The parcel is currently located in the Southern District of Ohio.
4. On December 11, 2019, U.S. Postal Inspectors took custody of the Subject Parcel which was observed to be addressed to “AMELIA CROCKETT, 4200 BALLEY VIEW DR, KNOXVILLE TN 37917-1211” with a return address of “JONATHAN PRICE, 2466 ARBORVIEW DR, COLUMBUS OH 43229-6819”. The Subject Parcel is a white USPS Priority Mail flat-rate envelope measuring approximately 12 ½” x 9 ½” x ½” and weighing approximately 75 grams. The Subject Parcel was determined to have been mailed from Columbus, OH on or around December 9, 2019, with \$5.58 in electronic postage affixed. USPS records indicate the parcel was first scanned at a USPS processing facility in Columbus, OH on December 9, 2019, indicating the parcel was

likely deposited into a USPS collection box as opposed to being mailed from a USPS retail location or post office.

5. Your affiant knows from previous training, experience and seizures that the type of electronic postage affixed to the Subject Parcel is associated with illegal Dark Web activity. The postage meter used to purchase this electronic postage is currently leased by the USPS to a shipping company doing business as EasyPost. EasyPost then subleases this particular meter to a company doing business as Bitcoinpostage.info. Bitcoinpostage.info sells USPS postage in exchange for bitcoin payment allowing users to anonymously purchase postage and print mailing labels. The ability to purchase USPS postage using bitcoin, a form of electronic currency, is appealing to individuals involved in the sale and distribution of controlled substances on dark web marketplaces because it allows for the purchase of this postage without having to first convert funds to US currency.
6. On December 26, 2019, U.S. Postal Inspectors in Knoxville, TN attempted to conduct a knock and talk at 4200 Valley View Drive, Knoxville, TN 37917 in reference to the Subject Parcel. U.S. Postal Inspectors learned Amelia Crockett ("Crockett") did live at the residence but was not home at the time. U.S. Postal Inspectors were able to make telephone contact with a person who identified herself as Crockett who lived at the address at issue. Crockett indicated to investigators that she was neither expecting a parcel nor did she know anyone named "Jonathan Price" in Ohio. Crockett refused to provide consent to open the Subject Parcel and stated she "did not want to deal with the stuff".
7. USPS records indicate two additional parcels, mailed from Columbus, OH and utilizing the same electronic postage account, have been delivered to 4200 Valley View Dr, Knoxville, TN 37917. Priority Mail parcel 9405 5368 9784 6109 2741 97 was scanned as delivered on November 4, 2019 and was determined to bear the same addressee and return information as the Subject Parcel. Priority Mail parcel 9405 5368 9784 6047 7213 95 was scanned as delivered on September 30, 2019, however information regarding the sender and addressee names has been purged from USPS databases.
8. On December 26, 2019, checks of USPS, law enforcement, and open-source databases were conducted to determine the validity of the return name and address indicated on the Subject Parcel "JONATHAN PRICE, 2466 ARBORVIEW DR, COLUMBUS OH 43229-6819". According to USPS databases, 2466 Arborview Dr is a valid address in the 43229 zip code however "JONATHAN PRICE" was not found to be associated with the address.
9. Your affiant knows in the past, drug traffickers, particularly drug traffickers who utilize dark web marketplaces, have used legitimate names at legitimate addresses to receive parcels containing illegal narcotics, in an attempt to legitimize the shipment and reduce the chance of the parcel being identified as suspicious. In addition, individuals who use USPS for the shipment of illegal narcotics will frequently utilize the fictitious names at legitimate addresses for the same reasons.


10. Based on the postage affixed to the Subject Parcel, it is highly likely the parcel contains products purchased on a dark web marketplace. Throughout the last five years, while employees in the capacity as a U.S. Postal Inspector, your affiant has conducted searches of at least one hundred USPS parcels mailed using the same electronic postage account used in the mailing of the Subject Parcel. These searches were conducted as a result of undercover purchases from dark web marketplaces, consent searches, or pursuant to a federal search warrant. Each of these searches has resulted in the identification of controlled substances including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, various prescription medications, and synthetic opioids.
11. Your affiant is aware there are currently numerous dark web marketplaces in operation which sell, among other things, controlled substances including research chemicals and synthetic opioids. Fentanyl, a particularly potent and hazardous synthetic opioid, is often sold on these marketplaces. With the potential safety threat of fentanyl and the rapid onset of adverse health effects usually occurring within minutes of exposure, canine units are particularly at risk of immediate death from inhaling fentanyl. Based on this reason, the Subject Parcel was not examined by a drug sniffing K-9.
12. Based on the information contained herein, your affiant maintains there is probable cause to believe that the USPS Priority Mail parcel bearing tracking number 9405 5368 9784 6191 1550 84, the Subject Parcel, contains controlled substances and/or contraband, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 843(b). Based on the facts set forth in this affidavit, I submit that there is probable cause to believe that controlled substances are being concealed in the parcel, and seek the issuance of a warrant to search the parcel for controlled substances to be seized.

Respectfully submitted,



Justin D. Koble, United States Postal Inspector

Subscribed and sworn to before me on December 31st, 2019.



Honorable Kimberly A. Jolson
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

